The Martyrdom of John Brown

By Charles A. Jellison

Autumn, 1859. Robert E. Lee, Colonel, United States Army, was on leave from his Texas command and at home in Arlington when the summons from Secretary of War Floyd reached him. Without waiting to change from his civilian clothes, he joined the messenger, young Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart, and the two men rode hurriedly to the War Department building. There they were told of strange doings in the little town of Harpers Ferry, Virginia, fifty miles or so up the Potomac from Washington, at the mouth of the Shenandoah. Reports had it that an undetermined number of whites and negroes had invaded the town the night before, slaughtered its citizenry, and had then taken possession of the Federal arsenal. The leader of the group was thought to be a tall, bearded old man by the name of Isaac Smith, who had moved into the vicinity with his sons only a few weeks before.

With a detachment of horse marines from the Washington Navy Yard under his command, and the eager Lieutenant Stuart tagging along on his own time, Lee immediately made his way by rail to Harpers Ferry. Arriving at the town late on the evening of October 18, 1859, Colonel Lee, still in civilian clothes and noticeably blackened by his ride, learned that the invaders had barricaded themselves in the engine-house where they obviously intended to fight it out. The rumor was now abroad in the town that the man called Smith was really crazy old John Brown of Osawatomie, Kansas, but nobody could say for certain that this was true. At any rate, the numbers of the invaders had been shamefully exaggerated, and it now appeared that at the most there could not be more than a dozen of them inside the engine-house—hardly a sufficient horde to match Lee's Federal troops plus the hundreds of Virginia militia-men and cadets who had poured into the area during the day, but apparently a force large enough to cause something akin to panic in Dixie. As a Yankee wit later chided:

> There's a flutter in the Southland, a tremor in the air;
> For the rice-plains are invaded, the cotton fields laid bare;

And the cry of "Help" and "Treason" rings aloud from tongue and pen—
John Brown has crossed the border with a host of fifteen men.[1]

To Colonel Lee and the excited multitudes that thronged around the engine-house at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, on that mid-October night in 1859 the name of John Brown was by no means an unfamiliar one. For many years the fanatically religious and somewhat ill-balanced Brown had acted conspicuously in the role of self-appointed avenger for the Almighty against the unspeakable sin of slavery. In so doing he had not failed to gain a certain degree of national prominence, largely as a result of his readiness to spill blood for the holy cause. This readiness was nowhere more starkly demonstrated than at Pottawatomie Creek, Kansas, where three years before during the violent civil upheavals which then convulsed the Kansas Territory, "Captain" Brown and a band of free-soil followers had deliberately and quite at random murdered five pro-slavery settlers in cold blood.

Not long after the "Pottawatomie Massacre" and Brown's subsequent flight from Kansas, the old man's plans began to assume larger dimensions, and with the backing, material as well as moral, of certain hard-shelled abolitionist elements, John Brown of Osawatomie was by the autumn of 1859 ready to embark upon his greatest adventure. He would invade the outer rim of the South, free and arm all slaves he encountered, and thereby set off a chain reaction of servile uprisings which would resound throughout the Southland and eventuate in the sudden, violent extermination of the sin that was slavery. So it was that possessed with large thoughts of emancipation, and incidentally with the hope of capturing needed arms from the Federal arsenal, John Brown and a small following of not more than twenty men slipped quietly across the Potomac on the night of October 17, 1859, to launch at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, their fantastic crusade against slavery.

But the quixotic plans of Old Brown almost at once went awry, so much so, in fact, that by mid-morning of the following day the "Captain" and his miniature private army found themselves hopelessly besieged by an aroused citizenry in the Har-

[1] C. H. Webb, "Old John Brown at Harper's Ferry," printed poem found among the Executive Papers of Governor Henry A. Wise, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

pers Ferry engine-house—and there matters still stood when Colonel Lee and his Federal troops reached the area late that same evening. Early on the morning following Lee's arrival, as the dawn was breaking over the Blue Ridge not many miles to the East, and as two thousand curious spectators inched their way forward for a closer view of the little engine-house, John Brown fought out his last battle in a matter of three minutes' time. Colonel Lee noted the action in his memorandum book a few hours later:

> Waited until daylight as a number of citizens were held as hostages, whose lives were threatened. Tuesday about sunrise, with twelve marines, under Lieutenant Green, broke in the door of the engine-house, secured the insurgents, and relieved the prisoners unhurt. All the insurgents killed or mortally wounded, but four, Stevens, Shields, Coppie, and John Brown.[2]

During the encounter one of Brown's sons was killed. Another died of wounds soon after. Brown himself was badly cut about the head by Lieutenant Green's sword.

Such, briefly sketched, was the end of the Harpers Ferry affair which for nearly one hundred years has meant many things to many men. Was it, as one Southern historian insists, "nothing more or less than the efforts of a band of irresponsible outlaws,"[3] or was it really, as many people in the North came to feel soon after the raid, a great blow for the Almighty? Whatever the answer, one fact seems clear: In the engine-house at Harpers Ferry, John took his first step up the ladder to martyrdom. Had he died there that day, he probably would have climbed no higher. His fame would scarcely have outlived him, and John Brown's body would have mouldered in its grave unsung and unremembered. But Old Brown lived, for a time at least, and during the six weeks that remained to him between his capture and execution, he thrilled the world with his steadfastness of faith in God and his own convictions, and his unflinching courage in the face of death. Occasionally the plaguing thought has arisen that the old man was simply making the best of a bad situation. But be that as it may, there can be no denying the fact that he played his part well. John Brown died game, and therein lies the seed of his martyrdom.

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[2] R. E. Lee, Jr., *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York, 1904), p. 33.

[3] Avery Craven, *The Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861* (Baton Rouge, 1953), p. 368.

The blood-soaked old man was carried from the engine-house and taken to the paymaster's office in the armory, where he was laid out on the bare floor. About one o'clock in the afternoon, he was visited by Virginia's Governor Henry A. Wise along with the Old Dominion's fiery United States Senator James M. Mason of Winchester, both of whom had rushed to Harpers Ferry as soon as the news of the invasion reached them. Shortly after, the group was joined by Clement Vallandigham, puffy-faced pro-slavery Congressman from Ohio,[4] and then came others, among them the ubiquitous correspondent for Bennett's New York *World,* unwittingly on the threshold of his greatest story. The ever-gallant Lee offered to clear the room if his prisoner so wished, but John Brown preferred to tell the world. He was, according to Vallandigham, "anxious to talk and ready to answer anyone who chose to ask a question."[5] Thus at that moment began Brown's battle of tongue and pen which would resound throughout the North and end finally in legend.

What was it all about? Why had he come? Who had sent him? Calmly, patiently John Brown told the inquisitors his story and his vision:

> I want you to understand that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of colored people, oppressed by the slave system, just as much as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful. That is the idea that has moved me, and that alone. We expect no reward, except the satisfaction of endeavoring to do for those in distress and greatly oppressed, as we would be done by. The cry of distress of the oppressed is my reason, and the only thing that prompted me to come here.[6]

Throughout the entire interview the wounded man remained completely composed. There was no show of fear or discomfiture. When asked about letters, found in his carpetbag, which seemed to implicate prominent abolitionists in his raid, Brown politely refused to answer. To do so would be contrary to his idea of honor. It was enough for them to know that he had been sent by God. "He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever

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[4] Vallandigham was attempting to implicate his political rival, famed Ohio abolitionist Joshua Giddings.

[5] Vallandigham to Cincinnati *Enquirer*, October 22, 1859, in C. B. Galbreath, "John Brown," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications*, XXX (1921), 250.

[6] O. G. Villard, *John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After* (Boston, 1910), p. 466.

saw; cut and thrust and bleeding, and in bonds," Governor Wise remarked after the interview. "He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude, and simple ingenuousness."[7]

Later that afternoon John Brown was moved eight miles down the road to the jailhouse at Charles Town, the metropolis and court town of Jefferson County. On October 25, a week after his capture, he was placed on trial for murder and treason against the Commonwealth of Virginia. Why Brown, who had seized a Federal arsenal and had been captured by Federal troops, was surrendered without protest to state authorities is a question passed over lightly, even by Brown's most respected biographers. Perhaps Democratic President James Buchanan was reluctant to offend Southern voters by demanding possession of the prisoner, or, more likely he was simply clever enough to avoid fingering a political "hot potato." After all, as *Harper's Weekly* pointed out at the time, John Brown's fanatical behavior would be likely to cost the new Republican Party thousands of votes.[8] It doubtless seemed the greater part of wisdom, then, for Buchanan and his Democratic colleagues in Washington to let matters well enough alone.

The Old Dominion had no such qualms, however. Here was an issue that transcended politics, one which involved the sovereignty of the Commonwealth, and one which must be dealt with severely and suddenly. Thus, on October 31, after a trial which had lasted less than a week, Old Brown of Osawatomie was found guilty as charged. To his family Brown wrote that night from the Charles Town jailhouse:

> I feel no consciousness of guilt in the matter, nor even mortification on account of my imprisonment and irons; and I feel perfectly sure that very soon no member of my family will feel any possible disposition to "blush on my account."[9]

On the following Wednesday, November 2, 1859, Brown stood calmly before the court and heard his sentence read. He was to be hanged in public on Friday, the 2nd of December. "Brown received the sentence with composure," a correspondent for the Washington *National Intelligencer* reported, "and the only dem-

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[7] F. B. Sanborn, *The Life and Letters of John Brown* (Boston, 1885), pp. 571-572.
[8] October 29, 1859, p. 691.
[9] Brown to family, October 31, 1859, in "Words of John Brown," *Old South Leaflets*, General Series, Vol. LV, No. 94 (1897), 18. Hereafter cited as *Leaflets*.

onstration made was a clapping of hands by a man in the crowd who is not a resident of Jefferson County."[10] And so Captain Brown, condemned murderer and traitor, was returned to his cell in the Charles Town jailhouse to wait out his thirty remaining days. "Have you any objections," he later asked his jailer, "to my writing to my wife and telling her that I am to be hanged on the second of December?"[11]

Meanwhile, in many areas of the North concern for John Brown was blossoming into adultation. "Bloody" Brown of Kansas and "Crazy" Brown of Harpers Ferry had given way to a new and more venerable figure who was brave and God-like and bore no malice toward his captors. Millions of people had read or heard of his heroic behavior at the trial. Newspaper artists had sketched the old man, lying wounded on his cot in the front of the court room, with a hand to his ear in order that he might better hear through his bandages the charges made against him. So vividly did the press portray the trial and subsequent confinement of Old Brown that Northern readers "could fairly hear the clanking of his chains, could behold him on his bed of suffering, and later could see him toiling with his pen."[12] And what a mighty pen it was—the pen of a poet and a prophet!

> I cannot remember a night so dark as to have hindered the coming day, nor a storm so furious or dreadful as to prevent the return of warm sunshine and a cloudless sky. But, beloved ones, do remember that this is not your rest—that in this world you have no abiding place or continuing city. To God and his infinite mercy I always commend you.[13]

Yet, this was the man whom some people called insane. John Brown? Insane? "John Brown may be a lunatic," commented the Boston *Post*, but if so "then one-fourth of the people of Massachusetts are madmen."[14] To Ralph Waldo Emerson in Concord, Brown was "the rarest of heroes, a pure idealist, with no by-ends of his own. He is, therefore, precisely what lawyers call crazy, being governed by ideas, and not by external circumstances."[15] Said John Brown himself on this subject:

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[10] November 8, 1859.
[11] Villard, p. 560.
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 562.
[13] Brown to family, November 8, 1859, in *Leaflets*, pp. 31-32.
[14] Quoted in C. Vann Woodward, "John Brown's Private War," *America in Crisis*, edited by Daniel Aaron (New York, 1952), p. 113.
[15] R. W. Emerson, *Journals, 1820-1876* (Boston, 1909-1914), IX, 336.

> I may be very insane, and I am so if insane at all. But if that be so, insanity is like a very pleasant dream to me. I am not in the least degree conscious of my ravings, of my fears, of any terrible visions whatever; but fancy myself entirely composed, and that my sleep, in particular, is as sweet as that of a healthy, joyous little infant.[16]

But while John Brown lay in his prison at Charles Town, convinced of his own sanity, there was one who fared not so well. Five days after Brown's sentence, Gerrit Smith, New York State abolitionist whose past connections with Brown were well known, was carried away screaming to the Utica Insane Asylum. "Gerrit Smith shows continued marks of insanity," a New York journal reported later that month. "No one is allowed to see him, but it is understood that he refers in his ravings to the Harper's Ferry matter, and supposes himself arrested."[17]

As John Brown's sands continued to run out in the Charles Town jailhouse, sentiment in the North assumed a more positive expression. Feeling grew particularly vocal in New England, homeground of transcendentalism, where Old Brown was not without many and influential friends. "I would rather see the statue of Captain Brown in the Massachusetts State-House, than that of any other man I know," Henry Thoreau assured an aroused crowd in Concord. "I rejoice that I live in this age, that I am his contemporary. . . . If this one man's acts do not create a revival, it will be the severest possible satire on the acts and words that do."[18] And in Somersworth, New Hampshire, as in similar rural centers throughout New England, broadsides urged:

> ALL TRUE CHRISTIANS who believe in "Immortality through Jesus Christ alone," . . . to pray for CAPT. JOHN BROWN, who now is under sentence of death, and is to be hung next month for righteousness sake, and doing justly with his fellow men, his country and his God. . . .[19]

Noble John Brown! Truly the North seemed bent on making something more than mere man out of the bloody patriarch from Osawatomie, and the day of his execution neared, fewer

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[16] Sanborn, *Life and Letters*, p. 608.
[17] November 19, 1859, p. 742.
[18] Henry David Thoreau, *A Yankee in Canada, with Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers* (Boston, 1861), p. 161.
[19] Broadside dated November 4, 1859, in Executive Papers of Governor A. Wise, Virginia State Library, Richmond.

and fewer people could find it in their hearts to agree with Bennett's *Herald* that "Old Brown . . . deserved a long rope and a short shrift years ago."[20]

Perhaps no man in the nation was more acutely aware of the rising tide of feeling for Brown, than was Governor Henry A. Wise of Virginia. In his office at Richmond he watched his volume of mail grow larger daily, until by the eve of Brown's execution it had reached mountainous proportions. Threatening letters, imploring letters, letters from cranks, and from sincere and honest people in many walks of life—from all sections of the Northland they heaped themselves upon the Governor, and most of them spoke the same simple plea: "Spare Old Brown." Lewis Tappan, New York philanthropist, writing on behalf of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, urged Wise to commute Brown's sentence in the name of humanity. "(He is) a man of upright intentions," wrote Tappan, "of Christian principles, and of entire truthfulness. Certainly he has evinced since his arrest, moral qualities of a high order."[21] And from St. Paul, in the new state of Minnesota, a life was offered in return for Brown's: "Lay not his blood to your charge. Oh, spare his life, lest the Avenging Angel of God spread desolation over the land. Take *mine* instead of *his*."[22] The "governor of Pennsylvania" also doubtless had John Brown's welfare in mind when he wrote to Wise:

> Sir:
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> The(y) are triing [sic] to make a Civil war the north against South they say if hang them men you are a dam [sic] Son of a Bitch I will challenge you to a duel on any you say. . . .
>
> Yours Excellency
> Governor Packer
> of Pennsylvania[23]

Of more concern to Governor Wise, however, were the disturbing letters of warning he received which told of efforts in the offing to rescue John Brown from prison before the day of his execution. From Leavenworth in the Kansas Territory came the ominous report that members of Captain Brown's old Kansas band had organized over a thousand followers and were probably already on their way to Harpers Ferry. "They were

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[20] New York Herald, November 11, 1859.
[21] Tappan to Wise, November 4, 1859, Wise Papers, Richmond.
[22] George Lawton to Wise, November 12, 1859, Wise Papers.
[23] Dated Nov. 11, 1859. Marked "Surgery." Wise Papers.

armed with two of Colt's revolvers and two bowie knives each," claimed the informant. "One of the knives is nearly two feet in length, the other of the ordinary kind. . . . I also infered [sic] . . . that there were about one thousand Sharps rifles in the vicinity of the ferry."[24] Crazy? Another crank? Perhaps, but Governor Wise could not forget the fact that two months before the Harpers Ferry raid, Secretary of War Floyd had received a similar warning revealing Brown's plans, and had, to his everlasting regret, ignored it. Wise would avoid making the same error. He would order more state troops into the Charles Town area.

By late November Charles Town had taken on the semblance of a city besieged. Cordons of troops encircled the town, waiting for the attack which many felt was bound to come. No strangers were allowed to enter or leave the area without giving a full account of their doings, and minor aberrations from the norm were often cause enough for arousing suspicion and anxiety. On one dark night a picket on the front line became unnerved and fired on a wayward cow. The shot caused panic in the town, and word soon spread that Old Brown's men had come. Drums rolled and arms clattered, but the affair ended harmlessly enough when daylight revealed a peaceful countryside and a dead cow. Further excitement, of a more evanescent nature, arose when rumor leaked down from the North that Henry Ward Beecher, fearsome abolitionist preacher, was on his way to Charles Town to pray for the soul of John Brown. This too was soon proved to be a false menace, however, and the little town again settled back into a nervous calm as it awaited, behind the protection of some three thousand state troops, Old Brown's final hour. When two days before the execution, Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived in the area with four companies of Federal reinforcements from Fort Monroe, he was able to report that "the feelings of the community seem to have settled down."[25]

Meanwhile, John Brown in his cell at the Charles Town jailhouse continued to conduct himself heroically and to say noble things with tongue and pen. To his old schoolteacher in Litchfield, Connecticut, he wrote: "As I believe most firmly that

[24] Anon. Undated. Wise Papers.
[25] Lee to wife, December 1, 1859, in R. E. Lee, Jr., Recollections, p. 22.

God reigns, I cannot believe that anything I have done, suffered, or may yet suffer, will be lost to the cause of God or of humanity."[26] And in a final letter to his family, written two days before his death: "Do not feel ashamed on my account; not for one moment despair of the cause; or grow weary of well-doing. I bless God. I never felt stronger confidence in the certain and near approach of a bright Morning; and a glorious day."[27] To visitors and captors alike John Brown showed himself at all times ready and eager to die for his convictions, and to all he offered a quiet courtesy and kindness, untainted by any trace of personal animosity. Only occasionally did he evince impatience or annoyance. So it was with the well-intentioned, slave-holding minister who had offered to pray for Old Brown's soul. NEVER! Slavery was a SIN, and John Brown refused to allow his salvation to be jeopardized by the prayers of a sinner.

On December 1, Old Brown's wife arrived from Philadelphia by way of Harpers Ferry, and there in the little jailhouse in Charles Town, Virginia, as the North looked on with wrenched heart, John and Mary Brown spoke to one another for the last time. For a few hours they talked about God and John Brown's will and the education of their children, and then, under the protection of a military escort provided by General Taliaferro of the state militia, Mary Brown returned to Harpers Ferry to await the delivery of her husband's body. On the following morning John Brown slipped on that pair of red carpet slippers with which he would climb the golden stairs, and penned a final prophetic message to his countrymen. It read:

> I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood. I had, as I now think vainly, flattered myself that without much bloodshed it might be done.[28]

Friday, December 2, 1859, was a clear, crisp autumn day. Shortly before eleven o'clock in the morning, a closely-guarded John Brown stepped out of the Charles Town jailhouse and climbed into the back of an open furniture wagon. Perfectly

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[26] Brown to Rev. H. L. Vaill, November 11, 1859, in James Redpath, *The Public Life of Captain John Brown* (Boston, 1860), p. 352.

[27] Brown to Family, November 30, 1859, in Villard, *Brown*, p. 521.

[28] Confession, p. 28.

composed, he took his seat on a long box which contained his own coffin. As the wagon, preceded by three companies of infantry troops, began its slow trip to the scaffold, the old man pushed back the brim of his black slouch hat and gazed at the mountains to the east. "Why, Mr. Sadler, you have a lovely country surrounding you," he remarked to the undertaker, who was driving the wagon. "I had no idea it was so lovely .... Is the Blue Ridge always as beautiful as it is this morning?"

"Yes," replied the undertaker. "Yes, always so on bright days."[29]

When the procession reached the field outside of town, where the execution was to take place, John Brown got down from the wagon unaided and walked toward the scaffold. A correspondent for the Baltimore *Daily Exchange* would still recall the drama of the scene nearly a generation later:

> I see him as he places his foot on the first step. No bravado, but a calm mien and exquisite poise, step after step he takes, as though he were ascending the stairs in a gentleman friend's home to a chamber in which he was to rest.[30]

On the floor of the scaffold Brown moved to the center of the trap and then, on a sign from the sheriff, removed his hat and placed it at his feet. His arms were bound to his waist, leaving his giant hands free, and a sturdy cotton rope was slipped over his head and adjusted into place under his great beard. Finally, a white hood was fitted over his face. But then, at the last moment a delay! The troops in the field below had not yet assumed their proper alignments, and while the undisciplined boots of Virginia's militiamen shuffled into position, John Brown, with noose and hood in place, waited erect and motionless beneath the gallows. Nearly ten minutes later the hangman's axe sliced through the rope which supported the trap, and Old Brown of Osawatomie began his long journey into eternity.

In the North, December 2nd did not pass by unnoticed. Throughout many areas it was a day of public prayer and pro-

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[29] S. K. Donovan, "John Brown at Harper's Ferry and Charlestown," *Ohio Archæological and Historical Publications*, XXIX (1921), 332.

[30] *Ibid.*

test. In Ravenna, Ohio, near which Brown had spent much of his life,

> the church bells . . . will be tolled from one to two o'clock P.M., that being the supposed hour of execution—the hour during which the spirit of the murdered martyr will wing its flight to the bosom of its murdered, crucified Savior.
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> At 7 o'clock this evening, a meeting will be held at the Town Hall. . . . The Ladies and Gentlemen of Ravenna, who hate oppression, and all its bloody, revengeful, savage barbarities, and who sympathize with the devoted MARTYRS OF LIBERTY, are invited to attend.[31]

And in Concord, Massachusetts, on that December 2nd which Emerson described as "a strangely sultry day with threatening clouds and something ominous in the air,"[32] the citizenry gathered to hear many of New England's finest minds and purest souls exalt the name of John Brown. Emerson, himself, and Bronson Alcott contributed their erudite prose in brief but memorable eulogies. Thoreau read lines from Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Soul's Errand," and the congregation joined in singing a new hymn, written for the occasion:

> Today beside Potomac's wave,
> Beneath Virginia's sky,
> They slay the man who loved the slave,
> And dared for him to die.
> The Pilgrim Fathers' earnest creed,
> Virginia's ancient faith,
> Inspired this hero's noblest deed,
> And his reward is—DEATH!
> Great Washington's indignant shade
> Forever urged him on—
> He heard from Monticello's glade
> The voice of Jeff-er-son.
> No selfish purpose armed his hand.
> No passion aimed his blow;
> How loyally he loved his land
> Impartial time shall show.[33]

Earlier in the day, not far to the west in the Connecticut River Valley, a Springfield man had found time for a brief message of foreboding to Governor Wise:

> As I write the bells far and wide toll the martyrdom of John Brown. Congregations of men and women meet and unite in

[31] Broadside, Wise Papers, Richmond.
[32] Emerson, Journals, IX, 365.
[33] "Hymn Sung at Concord, December 2, 1859." Printed copy among Wise Papers, Richmond.

> solemn prayer—business is hushed. The entire community are awaiting—solemnly awaiting—the hour when they shall feel it is over. Gov. Wise, can you imagine what an awakening will take place in another hour?[34]

In the field outside Charles Town, Virginia, the body of John Brown hung for thirty-five minutes. Shortly before noon it was cut down, listened to and otherwise checked for signs of continuing life, and then prepared for its final journey northward. John Brown was dead. The extravaganza, which had cost the Old Dominion a quarter of a million dollars, was ended. Professor Thomas J. Jackson could now lead his corps of Lexington cadets back to the safety of the classroom, and John Wilkes Booth, rifleman, could return with his militia comrades to his beloved Richmond. At four o'clock that afternoon, the simple pine coffin which held the remains of Captain John Brown was loaded onto a special train and taken to Harpers Ferry, where Old Brown of Osawatomie had begun his greatest adventure only six weeks before. Among those to witness the train's departure from Charles Town was Colonel Robert E. Lee, United States Army. On the evening before he had proved himself, in matters regarding John Brown, a poorer prophet than soldier, when to his wife he wrote: "Tomorrow will probably be the last of Captain Brown."[35]

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[34] Justice Morgan to Wise, December 2, 1859, Wise Papers.
[35] Lee to wife, December 1, 1859, in R. E. Lee, Jr., *Recollections*, p. 22.